
Gyumri Technopark To Be Launched by Late 2008

NOYAN TAPAN - 29/3/2008

It is envisaged that development of the Gyumri technopark's project will be completed and its implementation will begin by late 2008, the RA minister of trade and economic development Nerses Yeritsian stated, adding that the technopark will be specialized in IT, tourism and fashion sectors.

According to the minister, the vision of creation of Gyumri technopark should be described promptly based on the results of his March 28 visit to Gyumri, which will facilitate cooperation of the RA ministry of trade and economic development, which coordinates this work, and the other sides interested in the technopark's creation.

In his words, one purpose of establishing Gyumri technopark is to link the university system to business so local higher educational institutions also have to participate in the creation of the technopark. The minister said that there are enterprises in the city of Gyumri which are prepared to take part in the technopark's program (also by allocating their areas), such as Gyumri branch of the Armenian Center of Scientific Information, the Gyumri IT Center. The latter, according to N. Yeritsian, is already a business incubator by its nature. It has a successful history of work, which shows that its experience may be used by Gyumri technopark.

Representatives of leading companies of IT industry (Microsoft, Synopsys, National Instruments), as well as tourism and fashion sectors have been involved in foundation of the technopark. Some international structures (the World Bank, the USAID, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) have agreed to participate in the work on creation of Gyumri technopark.

N. Yeritsian said that in 3-5 years after its being launched, the technopark may be able to assist with creation of over 100 small and medium enterprises. There is a goal to turn one or two of them into big enterprises to enter international market within this period. The minister expressed an opinion that Gyumri may become a business center, taking into account its cheap labor and infrastructures (as compared with Yerevan), development of the capacities of Gyumri airport and the business skill of local residents.

The minister announced that the state is ready to provide small grants to Gyumri technopark's researchers for the development and implementation of ideas, as well as to set up an advisory structure with the aim of "transforming these ideas into business", which in its turn will help find financing sources for the technopark's enterprises and attract capital of the Diaspora. It is envisaged to allocate 80 mln drams (about 260 thousand USD) from the state budget for Gyumri technopark-related work.

N. Yeritsian said that the experience of implementing the Gyumri technopark program will be used for developing a larger technopark project near Yerevan.
